

MEDIA SCENE

A woman with long, wavy brown hair is shown from the waist up, wearing a black bikini. She is holding a large, silver, futuristic prop gun with both hands. She is looking back over her right shoulder towards the camera with a slight smile. The background is dark and out of focus.

ISSUE 37

\$1.75

SPECIAL
PIN-UP ISSUE

CAROLINE
CINEMA'S NEWEST SEX SYMBOL

ROCKY HORROR
THE KINKIEST CULT EVER

THE COMIC GIRLS
FROM BLONDIE TO TORCHY

STAR TREK
READY FOR LAUNCHING

COMICS
MORE

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publisher and editor

STERANKO

associate editor

KEN BRUZENAK

west coast editor

DON GLUT

editorial secretary

PAULINE BIGNONIA

correspondents

KEN FEDUNIEWICZ

DOUG MURRAY

BILL WARREN

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MEDIASCENE (USPS 047-050)



Several weeks ago I went back to school at the invitation of my good friend, Harry "A" Chesler, who many of you might remember as the publisher of a host of Golden Age comic books such as *Dynamic*, *Major Victory* and *Punch*.

The occasion was a graduation ceremony, and the class was from the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon Art. Of the near one hundred students that attend the graduation on one level, or another, seventeen were about to receive their diplomas.

The air was thick and rich with excitement as the once-in-a-lifetime moment approached. Their names were called, and the young artists responded, their faces bright with the knowledge that school was out, childhood had officially ended. Careers were about to begin.

I knew the feeling, relived it with them. Aside of me, Harry Chesler watched the parade of eager talent pass by, surveying it in much the same way we undoubtedly had done over forty years ago when he was one of the men who created and shaped the comic business. The students were aware, too, that they would be carrying on a tradition that was almost a half century old. Their awkward self-confidence and playful arrogance was pleasant to see. They had come both to stay on their chosen course.

I placed myself somewhere in the middle of the two extremes, and secretly adopted my commencement for the one I never had. Then again, I never felt I needed one—or was that simply the justification of a self-writer philosophy?

Their eager end spirit took me back to the time when I was in a similar position. I was seventeen. I hadn't yet graduated from high school due to a peculiar circumstance. It wasn't that I was expelled, they just didn't let me back in school one day.

Doing my best to keep out of trouble, but not being too successful at it, I found myself spending time at the YMCA. This particular morning, right in the middle of a weight-lifting routine, one of the local street corner athletes happened to mention the fact that a new newspaper was in the process of establishing a full-scale operation just a few blocks away.

The editors of other papers in the city had given me the "keep practicing, kid!" routine for years, but what did they know? Here was a new outfit that was seeking out fresh blood—and mine was as fresh as any they would find. I phoned to make an appointment and apply for the position of staff artist. The girl who answered the switchboard recognized my voice (we had worked together a year or two earlier in one of my magic illusion acts). She said I was too late, that the job had just been filled. I had her connect me with the artist. He told me the job had just been filled.

The conversation ended at that point. But not the idea. I broke the routine, showered, went home and hastily assembled a portfolio of my art. Within the hour I was in the newspaper's offices confronting their staff artist. "I told you we have no place for you here!" he said, I dropped my portfolio on his desk. "How do you know? You haven't even seen my work yet!"

He looked at me, shook his head, laughed.

And he hired me. He never even looked at my work. He just said that anyone that wanted to get into the art field, laughed.

I assisted him for about three weeks, during which I learned the foundation of the advertising art business. That was my school, and I graduated when I walked out of the situation.

Then I retired for a few years on the money I had earned.

Retired, yes. Stopped working, no.

During this period I began developing new ideas that would eventually blossom into parallel careers. I began to apply the things I had learned in my apprenticeship. One of them was: be so proficient at what you do that no one can afford not to hire you to keep you away from the competition. It was the standard I aimed for in my work. It still is.

I had learned that success depended on more than just talent; there were a score of other factors involved—timing, luck, opportunity. But one was infinitely more important than the others. Determination. And that was something I was born with. In a way, it's like imagination—it can't be taught; it can only be developed. Call it self-control, tenacity, discipline, it's all the same—and it's as critical to an artist as his eyes. Especially a commercial artist who works in a competitive field.

While polishing my ideas and my philosophy, I peddled my bankbook by painting signs. I had only one steady account, a grocery chain that required about twenty-five new signs a week. It took an evening to produce them.

As money began to run out, and boredom began to set in, I decided to go back to work; and again turned to commercial art. It was almost an on-the-spot resolution. I scanned a phone book, found the nearest printer, called some samples of my work and simply walked in off the street.

In my experience I had learned that printers can always use reliable help. This one was no different. There was a spot for me, but we couldn't come to terms financially until suitable determination was applied. My

final offer was irresistible. "Put me on for a week. If I don't make \$150 for you within that time, you owe me nothing. If I do, start me at a salary of \$75 a week."

I worked there for four years. During that time, I learned most of what I know about printing and reproduction processes, type composition, camera work, platemaking, binding and dozens of other techniques that has given me an edge over my competition for the last decade or two. There's nothing like learning on the job; it's like going to school and getting paid for it too.

When I had gone as far as I could in that operation, I bowed out. I was ready for something new, perhaps a public relations position. I was on talking terms with one PR counselor I had gotten to know through his business with the printer. What I didn't know then about PR men is that they're never in their offices—and five visits produced nothing. I played pool a lot during the day, and made music at night with an endless string of rock bands. Then a peculiar thing happened: I received a call from the PR man. He had been trying to reach me for weeks, but could never catch me (probably because I was trying to find him). Without knowing I had been attempting to offer my services to him, he came up with a similar proposal. Was I interested in the position of art director for a new advertising agency he was establishing? The coincidence almost raised the hair on the back of my neck. To refuse would have been throwing all reason in the face of fate.

The opportunities were greater than ever before. So were the responsibilities. I accepted and subsequently turned out some of the finest work I have ever done. Four years later, I was out seeking other directions in which to channel my efforts. One di-

rection was film animation.

Another was the comics.

Almost by accident, I created a handful of superheros for Harvey in the mid-60s. They liked my writing, but not my art. I went elsewhere and developed a complete book for Tower. They rejected it, and I was back on the street. Archie Comics wanted me to design their superhero covers. Murray Boltinoff asked me to write for him at DC. But I was determined to make my own deal, and wound up in Stan Lee's office at Marvel. Remember what I said about being so good they can't afford not to hire you? They were almost Stan's very words.

What he said was: "Your work is primitive but exciting, Steranko! You're too good to let get away! What book do you want to do for us?"

It was as easy as that. The rest is history.

After comics, came paperback book covers.

Then Supergraphics, The History of Comics and MEDIA-SCENE.

What's ahead? It would only be a guess, just as it is for the seventeen graduates of the Kubert School. My immediate hope was that they had learned the lesson of determination, the discipline that would keep them alive during the struggle ahead. During the graduation dinner, I discovered some had already found a market for their skills—in animation, in advertising, yes, and even in comics.

The future would be safe. The good guys would win.

The graduation dinner was over, and the camaraderie of the past few years would soon diminish under the weight of the adventures that were ahead. The parking lot began to empty as the night grime flashed their goodbyes.

See you, Joe.

Take care, Murf.

Good night, Harry.

STERANKO

ALIEN ACTIVITY

I enjoyed **MEDIASCENE** 35. In particular, Mr. Staranek's comments in the editorial on limited perception; it appears that he anticipated some of the questions I had hoped to ask him concerning his view of his role as educators. Similarly, he anticipated some of the things I wanted to know about his announced retirement. It was nice to see the letters column reinstated. As for your Alien feature, it was highly enjoyable, and more readable than the A. F. I. Journal's coverage. The film was recently previewed here; I didn't have the opportunity to go myself, but those I know who did, alluded to **MEDIASCENE**'s coverage in comparison. Very nice issue.

Gerald Brown

Freeburg, IL

Allen has just established an all-time box office record for its opening week—something very pleased to report. We may even have had a little bit to do with that fact. To date, **MEDIASCENE** has still featured the biggest and best coverage of the film—in addition to doing it first.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

I would like to echo Dan Recchia's comments (**MEDIASCENE** 35) regarding the proximity of science fiction films not reaching the expectations of their writers. My first knowledge of *Battlestar: Galactica* came through the excellent reviews in this magazine, yet I felt that the actual production lacked the atmosphere and professional quality which was presented within the pages and illustrations. I don't want to pull out the cliché of "something being lost in the translation," but I feel to see how the creators' ideas managed to get diluted onto the film. It cannot all be the fault of the network executives, and similar philistines. Or can it?

Anyway, reiterate that **MEDIASCENE**'s pre-show articles often exceed the realities of the production itself (now, if we can only convince you people to go into the movie business). I only hope that Allen be given exception to Recchia's observation.

Keep **MEDIASCENE** going... please.

Michael J. Wolff

Houston TX

Just in case you haven't seen *Alien* yet, our unofficial man-of-the-street offers his warmest...

THE RECCHIA REVIEW

I saw *Alien* this afternoon—twice—and I'm just bowled over by it. The **MEDIASCENE** episode, for a change, only gave a foretaste of a film turned out to be completely satisfying on every level, as opposed to the coverage on the god-awful *Glenn Larson/Universal* TV movies that are all hardware and no more. I appreciate spread to look back on after seeing the film, it's going to have to run pictures of

the alien itself now, you know that. I'm going to bug you till you do.

You're absolutely correct about paperback illustrations using that "Frazetta/Glaser" approach, particularly many of the artists in that book *Tomorrow and Beyond*—one of the ones you mentioned. I think Bob Pepper, Wilton McLean and Don Ponzichetti come the closest. Why hasn't Bryan Preis used any of the illustrations in that book for any of his publications?

Your editorial got me thinking which films I've always wanted to see. I'm sure that there are things I don't know of that I'd love—like I absolutely flipped over *The Third Man* when I first saw it only a few years ago; same goes for *Mickey One*. What does the Gerry Anderson puppet series *The Secret Service* or the Honor Blackman *Avenger* or the *Eight Fathoms* have to do with a dingy school that I really want to see only because it stars Jean Shepherd, the only film he ever made to my knowledge. Also the so-called *Blacklight Zone* that I dug in the 1970s, *Danica Hall* and I forget the other one. Some TV shows I'd love to see again. *Way Out*, which to me was one of the most funniest series ever on TV, and the 1959 British series *The Invisible Man*. I miss the half-hour anthology shows that television used to do so well that it brought *Zone*. If anything, they were not as visually oriented as television and films are today because of budgets and therefore had to rely on the script and direction to convey mood—a very theater-oriented if you think about it. The current trend towards twelve-minute series and very limited production is all done in regards to visual entertainment, and I have to say that I do miss the low-budget half-hour TV shows of the past very much. Comedy on television today remains locked in the half-hour low-budget sitcoms format and possibly it's time for a reversal, with the dramatic shows being produced like *All in the Family* and the comedy shows produced like *Centennial*. It's thought (just up Recchia).

Alan Recchia

Mamaroneck NY

Videotape and syndicated reruns make viewing at least some of the older odd goodies possible. Hopefully, the people who organize comic conventions will take your suggestions to heart when planning their film programs. We wouldn't mind seeing the old *Avenger* guys ourselves. Would anyone out there be interested in a listing of films that have influenced today's sci-fi and horror movies? I could do such a list year ago, and might consider an annotated breakdown if response was favorable. Incidentally, the hardcover *Illustrated Alien* did feature a couple of flipped-in plates by Don Ponzichetti that were a real delight.

WELL, NOBODY'S PERFECT

In response to the critics of your publication, I'd just like to



say that I, for one, appreciate **MEDIASCENE** for what it is. It's pretty to look at, it lets me in on the best in graphic art, portfolios and films before anybody else and presents me with fascinating, priceless backstage looks at the comic and film industries.

As for you, Jim, I'll admit that you're offensive at times and can be egotistical, petty and haughty. But you have character, son, you're like nobody else I know and that individuality extends itself into **MEDIASCENE**. Robert Loren Fleming Brockport NY

Thanks, Bob. We've been trying to correct our faults. Just last week we were thinking of taking medical lessons from Neal Adams.

EXPANDED PERCEPTION

I've been with you since the first issue of **COMIXSCENE**. When really prompted this letter was your editorial in **MEDIASCENE** 35. I agree with you 100%. Having taken several art history and art appreciation courses in the college days is one of the best things I ever did. It helped me to perceive a lot of beautiful things. I just hope your editorial will open the eyes of others in tandem.

Dave Scott

Manion OH 43302

We were surprised and gratified by the mail that came in from our Limited Perception editorials. If there's enough interest, we'd consider expanding the ideas and running them with appropriate visual material.

MANNING DOESN'T SWING

Very interesting Russ Manning review. I hadn't even known there was a *Star Wars* strip until this article, but I took a look and, lo and behold, there it was in the *Philly Bulletin*. An intriguing look at how the whole thing was conceptualized and put into production.

Garrett Hayner

Newtown Square PA

According to the grapevine, Manning has left the *Tarzan* strip to devote his full attention to

Star Wars, and, if there's a comic novelization of *The Empire Strikes Back*, it's our guess he'll get your first crack at it.

WOULD YOU BELIEVE...ESP?

I enjoyed the article on Shogun Warriors, particularly because it touched on many Japanese series which I've been long wanting to get information on. Fantastic 8th Man comic, for example, I consider one of the finest cartoons ever produced for television, due to the nature of the stories. 8th Man was perhaps the only cartoon hero from the 60s I could remember who never intentionally killed or destroyed—often, witnessing the death of a villain, he would remorse the fact that ANY lives were lost.

I've just read Don McGregor's and Paul Gulacy's *Señor*. The character/nemesis of Blackstar surely looks awful feminist! Tall, dark & handsome—catchy... and that name sounds like it might have belonged to a magician! I knew Gulacy had a thing about making his characters resemble movie and television personalities, but this was something else!

The Comicscode portion is always exciting for me—you seem to have more information about upcoming projects than the companies themselves! How about an occasional article on an "outstanding series"? I know *magazine* like *FOOM* already has these kind of things, but I think it'd be interesting to see an outsider's viewpoint.

Henry R. Kulase

Camden NJ

Several months ago, during a conversation with John Bussemme, he told us he was ameked to read an item in **MEDIASCENE** regarding a decision he had made about a future comic project—he had made the decision just the day before the issue arrived. Let's see our competition top that!

THE TWO-YEAR ITCH

I've read two interviews with you recently in fanzines and I don't care how much you would rather do **MEDIASCENE**. I really miss your stories, and now I see that you won't be leaving every so long to look at it. There was someone to take your place the way the Adams' clones have killed the gay man, it wouldn't be such a pain to buy ten or twenty comics at a time knowing there is nothing but run of the mill hey-yo Marvel stuff. Gulacy isn't too bad, but he doesn't write what he has to write.

All the same, my appreciation and deep thanks. Alfred Bester New York City

We agree completely—except the appreciation and thanks is all ours.

About four years ago, we published an All-Girl issue of **MEDIASCENE** which has been a constant seller on our back number inventory. It's taking this long to do it again, but we're making up for it by producing a two-part special. Next issue will complete the series' analysis of *The Comic Girls* (which was condensed from a chapter in his third, and as yet unpublished, volume of *The History of the Commercial Field*, and will make more time for things like future volumes of *The History of*

Comics and other projects including visual novels to be produced. And even if those are only every two years, it's still better than nothing, don't you think?

SHOW AND TELL

I have been following your feature, *Breaking into Comics*, and I find that I am learning a tremendous amount about the field from it. The picture you paint makes the profession seem rather bleak. At any rate, your words have helped me prepare for the hardships that are yet to come.

I hope you were as happy with the outcome of your show at the Winnipeg Art Gallery as the people who came to see it were. It is about time the public was made aware of the work that is involved in producing an illustrated story. Your show is another step closer to that goal. Beginning, hopefully.

Van Andrusch

Vermont BC

The Staranek Graphic Narrative show opened at the Winnipeg Art Gallery exactly a year ago. To our knowledge, it is the biggest one-man comic art exhibition ever assembled [300 originals—and perhaps only 300 originals]—and perhaps only one produced anywhere. It is booked to travel throughout Canada until the States afterward. We've been planning a feature on the show for quite a while. Maybe now's the right time.

BESTER'S BEST

Thank you so much for a most impressive and outrageously flattering interview in **MEDIASCENE**. You know, it's the dearest thing, as I said, one just tries to write the best story that one can, and who so surprised as me to discover that it's turned into a goddam classic. It's also embarrassing.

Every young writer (and I was young once) dreams of producing a classic but he always imagines that it will be the Finger of God on the brow, with music by Scramin... not just the hard everyday work of meeting a tough deadline.

All the same, my appreciation and deep thanks.

Alfred Bester

New York City

We agree completely—except the appreciation and thanks is all ours.

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Dear Caroline

Over the years the movies have had an ample and almost endless parade of girls and goddesses, dames and dollies, models, madams and madonnas sinking across the silver screen. They left their mark in the cement on Hollywood Boulevard in front of Grauman's Chinese Theatre—and in the hearts of the American male animal who idolized, adored and, yes, even worshipped them. Some were as petite as hummingbirds, while others put the cleave back into cleavage. The screen grew from a standard square to Cinemascope to Panavision in an attempt to capture their double features. A few of them did their best to cover up their charms. Some of them turned their films into peep shows. Others simply damned the critics and took it *all* off for the sake of art. They had names like Rita, Lana, Marilyn, Brigitte, Gina, Kim, Sophia, Liz, Elke and Raquel—and could turn he-men into jellyfish or milquetoasts into balls of fire. And so, we come to you, an impossible combination of all of them: sweet but sexy, demure yet dangerous, beautiful and believable at the same time. You've made us *forget* the others by becoming a fantasy girl of the 70s.

Who knows what the 80s will bring?



She may not be one of the great film actresses of all time, but she does have a fanatic following of moviegoers. She was educated in a convent, but was based on an entire career on sexy, chaste, charming and an infinite variety of skimpy swimsuits. She's a model turned movie star whose screen presence seems to be centered on long legs, deep cleavage, large green eyes and a sultry eroticism—yet she protests: "I'm basically quite ordinary and rather shy."

Caroline Munro is the closest thing modern movies have to a pin-up queen—a statue position she has enjoyed for almost ten years. Her career-mold appears to have been cast around a long-running series of calendar photos posed for Lamb's Navy Rum of England. Although she decorates only a month or two in each calendar, Caroline has created a sensation by displaying a provocative amount of flesh. Caroline's career began at the very top of the modeling world, on the cover of *Vogue* magazine, in 1967—she was 17 years old, and had just enrolled in a modeling school to acquire poise. Since then, her advertising commitments have never slowed down, extending from a multitude of magazine covers, television commercials and even 24-sheet billboard posters. Most assignments are for the European market, allowing her to travel, projecting her face and figure throughout Germany, France, Switzerland, Spain and the West Indies. American fans were overjoyed last year when Noxema Shave Creme hired her to do a pair of TV commercials which promoted the sensual rewards inherent in their product.

Caroline's career in films began shortly after her modeling debut, with a silent bit-part in *Casino Royale*. Her next appearance, in a film titled *Where's Jack?*, was another wordless walk-on, but the producers saw the wisdom of including a photo of Caroline in a bikini as part of their press kit.

Finally, in *A Talent For Loving*, she was called upon to deliver lines. A light, comedy western, the film was an entertaining showcase for Caroline's budding abilities, and, it introduced her to her co-actor and soon-to-be husband, Judd Hamilton.

From 1970 to 1977 Caroline spent a great deal of time in horror and fantasy films like *The Abominable Dr. Phibes* and its sequel, *Dracula AD 1972*, *Captain Kronos*, *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad*, *I Don't Want to Be Born and At the Earth's Core*. She also did a guest appearance in one episode of TV's *New Avengers*. All of the roles capitalized on her sexual presence to bridge the gaps between death plots and subsequent murders.

The *Spy Who Loved Me* finally provided Caroline with a big-budget, pre-sold world-wide vehicle in 1977. She was featured in a part that allowed her to act, letting her see that she had in any three previous films, but was careful to keep her costume smaller than a handkerchief.

Starcrash, currently in release,

is a breakthrough project for Caroline, because it features her in the leading role as a ray-gun toting space pilot decked out in a variety of scanty leather and skin-tight vinyl costumes.

In *Starcrash*, Caroline plays Stella Star, a free-flying privateer in space, who is first seen on a smuggling run, trying to ditch an Imperial Police patrol. Finally captured and transported to a hard labor camp, Stella attempts to escape, but is recaptured and immediately released, providing she agrees to try to rescue the Emperor's son from the scheming Count Zerk Am. Through trials by combat and some of the wildest escapes this side of Andromeda, Stella races seductively to a climactic death duel and a doubly explosive nuclear finish.

In many ways *Starcrash* provides the ultimate showcase for the Caroline mystique. The role and the situations, along with the variety of revealing uniforms, are representative of the image that she projects, one which has become her trademark.

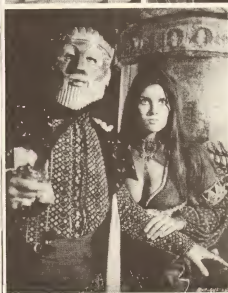
Part of Caroline's appeal is that she always remains at least partially clothed—leaving the audience and letting their imaginations do the rest. This is a deliberate move on her part, ensuring out of genuine modesty, and insured by a no-nudity clause in her contract. Regrettably, this position has cost her more than a few choice roles, but it has provided chaste collectors with literally hundreds of tantalizing photos of their dream-girl in form-fitting costumes, bikinis, diaphanous gowns, hot pants, leather boots, silk stockings, low-cut dresses and whatever Frederick's of Hollywood can envision.

Another attraction for Caroline's fan is that she is often openly aggressive—a feminist's (or masochist's) delight. She usually portrays a tough, fearless, athletic, smouldering symbol of sensuality, gripping a knife or spear, with an inviting, yet challenging, smile. The overtures to the bondage-minded are as unmistakable as they are pleasing to watch.

Now that *Starcrash* has rocked her into full-fledged stardom, Caroline is willing to see if she will be called upon to break out of the ten year-long fantasy film rut and into major movies. Her no-nudity clause has already led her to turn down a part in Joan Collins' *The Bitch*, sequel to last year's *The Stud*, yet there are always the many modeling assignments outside films to keep her busy.

Meanwhile, her fans around the world will continue to hunt out the Caroline clippings in obscure movie magazines, the never-published stills found on discarded contract sheets, calendars, paperback covers, cigar ads and billboards. And for real fanatics, there's even a life-size (5' 7") cardboard standee.

Just don't ask what they plan to do with all these manifestations of Carolinemia—the answer might just make the shy and innocent Ms. Munro blush with embarrassment. ●







CONNIE by Frank Godwin
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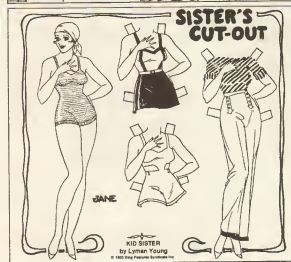
BETTY
by C.A. Voight
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ETTA KETI by Paul Robinson
© 1985 N.Y. Artists



THE
GIBSON
GIRLS
by
Charles
Gibson



SISTER'S
CUT-OUT

JANE

KID SISTER
by Lyman Young
© 1985 Image Associates



Comic Strips

THE FOUR-COLOR FEMALES FROM BLONDIE TO SONJA ABRIDGED FROM THE STERANKO HISTORY OF COMICS

Call it fatal fascination.
Call it sex appeal.

Call it whatever you like—it's been in the comics from the very beginning. Whether out of inspiration, perspiration or just plain frustration, the female of the species has captured the attention of cartoonists and caricaturists since Adam took the first bite of Eve's apple.

From the earliest forms of illustrated fiction, newspaper strips and gag panels to comic books, undergrounds and graphic novels, artists have explored the virtues and vices of the human condition through female characters. Consider the humor of *Blondie*, the romance of *Abbie and Stacie*, the benevolence of *Brenda Starr*, the sensuality of *Torchy*, the fantasy of *Barbarella*, the violence of *Red Sonja*.

Many of them have been as popular and enduring that they have made their way into the mainstream of American mythology. Some of their creators have been launched to national prominence through their visualizations of women while others of equal skill and insight have been forgotten in the shadows of obscure comic history. Collectively, their art, much like film and other forms of popular fiction, has been shaped by the society it portrays—and, in turn, has been instrumental in shaping society through the impact of its recognition and repetition.

It was hardly a coincidence that their approach to drawing merged perfectly with the subject matter to produce the archetypes that we know today. Like all great artists, from the Renaissance painters to the surrealists, these craftsmen were fulfilling their ambitions, perhaps even their destinies, by combining their philosophies with that graphic product.

Those archetypes can be resolved into four basic classifications. The first category was the original form, from which the others grew—the Wholesome Girl; clean-cut, friendly, pretty. The Glamour Girl came next, with her superior physical attraction and sophisticated demeanor. The Fantasy Girl followed, her personae and abilities enhanced beyond that of her peers. The last division is that of the Erotic Girl, whose sole purpose is to elicit a sexual response from her audience. To assay their development and cultural influence, one must establish a reasonable starting

point.

At the turn of the century, illustrator and satirist Charles Dana Gibson became famous for his coquettish, yet dignified women. Richard Outcault turned them into innocent bytelanders who endured the Yellow Kid's pranks. Frederick Oppar kept them homely, but warm of heart in *Happy Hooligan*.

The age of the newspaper funnies had begun, and with it came the parade of female favorites. Roles like the one Mamma played in *The Captain and The Kidd* paved the way for the further subjugation of the family man in strips such as *Bringing Up Father*, with Maggia wailing the rolling pin as Jiggs' attention strayed to more tempting possibilities.

Cliff Sterrett's *Polly* was one of those possibilities. As she evolved from her initial debut in 1912, *Polly* was the idealized American girl next door type—wavy-eyed, long-lashed, dark-haired, pug-nosed, long-legged and about as capable they came. Others who followed in her petite footsteps through the glittering pages of the early 20s were *Dixie Dugan*, *Boots and her Buddies*, and *Jane Arden*.

Of all the artists who contributed to the Wholesome Girl stereotype, Gibson remains as its prime purveyor. The pretty, perky, slim neatly coiffed, friendly but aloof image he created went through dozens of manifestations at the hands of others—from the crudest cartoon to the most realistic. Sterrett's standard funny paper approach was awakened by an appealing sense of design: that organized abstract black and white areas into exciting patterns. George McManus' controlled linear style was a perfect complement to his schematic narrative point of view. He chose to mix realistic pretty girls (as in *Roala's Baau*) with broad caricatures. John Stibelart opted for a straight illustrator's technique in this portrayal of *Dixie Dugan*. A definite style he had yet to emerge, but the ultimate Wholesome Girl image was firmly established as a hallmark in American popular culture.

The passing of WWI and the advent of women's rights gave birth to a new kind of strip: the emancipated girl. *Winnie Winkle*, *Tillie the Toiler* and *Ella Cinders* spent almost as much time searching through the "help wanted" ads as real-life Americans. To balance the scales, a

host of frivolous, but fashionable flappers such as *Beautiful Babs*, *Dumb Dora*, *Betty*, *Fritzi Ritz* and *Ella Kett* charmed their way into the hearts of their readers. Even *Dick Tracy's* *Chastar Gould* took a shot at the genre with his 1931 series *The Girl Friends*.

The nation's comic strips were suddenly overpopulated by secretaries and showgirls, movie stars and models, nurses and newspaperwomen. All of them were beautiful, blessed with the "it" that had made silent films *Clare Bow* so famous.

Best of all, they were desirable, yet discreet. Though they'd appear in the opening stages of undress from time to time or reveal their trim figures in the latest swimwear, their sex appeal was not in what they showed, but in what they didn't show.

Some of them got married, like *Blondie*, and joined the ranks with *Toots and Casper*, *Mr. and Mrs. and the Gumps*. Others opted for independence and followed *Little Orphan Annie* through the newly-opened gateway to female adventureland.

Frank Godwin's vestly undergarred strip, *Conna*, was one of the best illustrated narratives of its period. Drawn in the style of his friend, James Montgomery Flagg, Godwin took his tell, blonde heroine through harp paces as a detective, and eventually as an adventuress in a fantasy world that extended into the realm of outer space. *Mary North* played Earlbomb. With a nursing degree in one hand and a pistol in the other, she fought off the *Yellow Menace* and a legion of equally inebrious villains.

The few female artists who strayed into the comic strip field generally chose somewhat lighter fare. Series by women, about women, for women usually fell into one of three categories: tykies, teenagers and old timers. A random roll call reveals the pattern; there was *Rose O'Neill's Kewpie*, *Grace*, *Orynthia's Dimples*, *Fenny Cory's Little Miss Muffat*, *Marge Henderson's Little Lulu*, *Hide Terry's Tanna*, *Glady's Parker's Mopay*, *Dee Conner's Mary Worth* and *Martha Orr's Appia Mary*.

There were some, of course, that were brave enough to break the rule. *Babe Messick's* flame-haired newswoman, *Brenda Starr*, is a prime example. Beautiful, bubbly but brash, she set the pace for fast-action romantic adventures. *Brenda* was straight out of *Vogue*, with a high fashion



POLLY by Cliff Sterrett
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BLONDIE by Chic Young
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NORAH by George McManus
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TILLIE THE TOILER by Russ Westover
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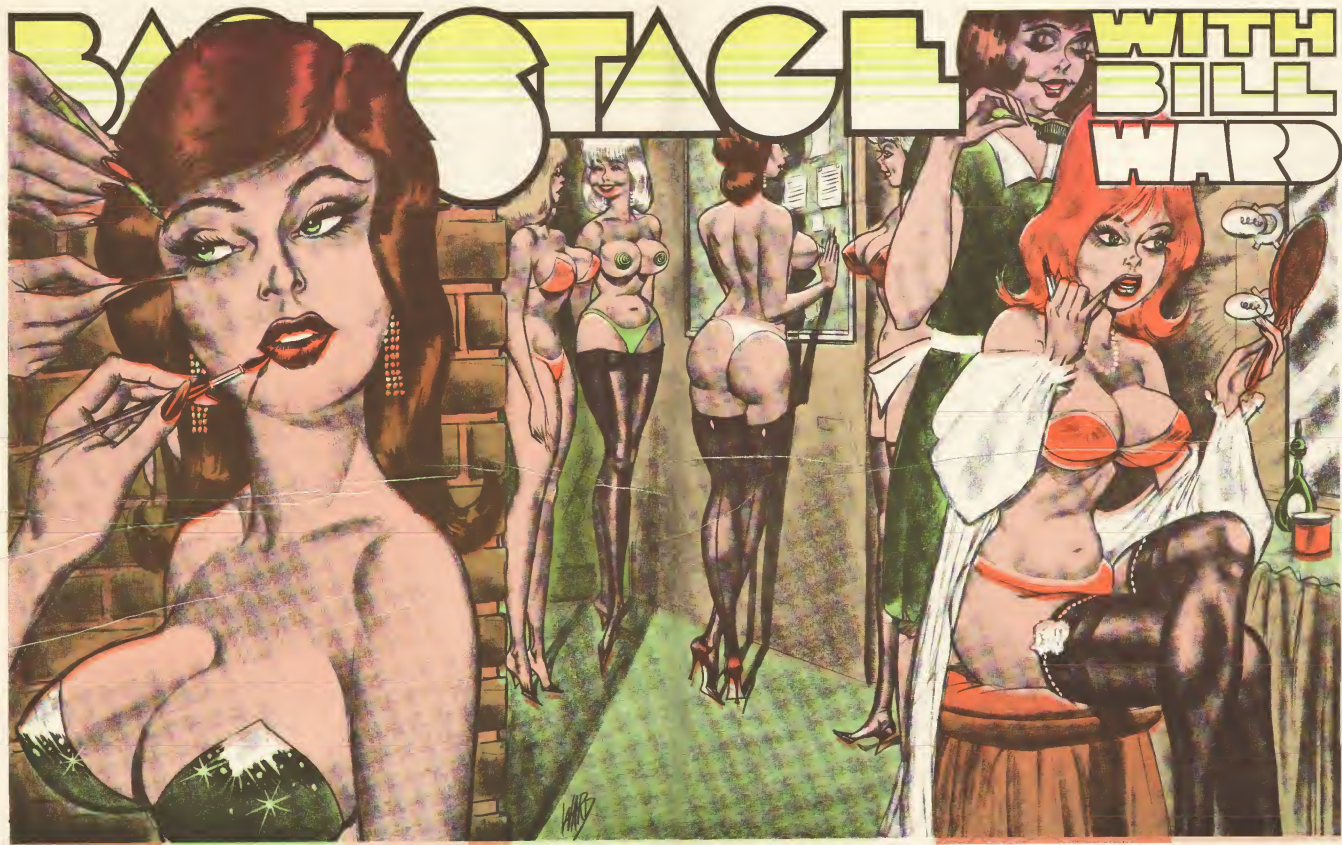
WINNIE WINKLE by Martin Grevener
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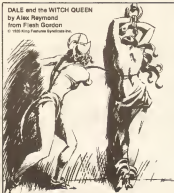
NORAH



BECKY GROGGINS by Raymond van Bursum
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DALE and the WITCH QUEEN
by Alex Raymond
from Flash Gordon
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DANCING GIRL

DAISY MAE
by Al Capp



MOON-BEAM
MC SWINE
by
Al
Capp



MAID
by
Al
Capp

SONJA by Alex Raymond
from Flash Gordon
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DALE by Alex Raymond
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JEAN FARGO
by Frank Frazetta
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LONG SAM by Bob Lubbers
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MODEST MAIDENS by Don Flowers
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LUCIA by Frank Robbins
from Johnny Hazard
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DESTINA



Terri by Frank Robbins
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Terri
by
Frank
Robbins



DINAH by Ray Gatto
from Quark, Inc.
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Glamour Girl profile as far away from the girl next door type as the Salvation Army is from your friendly neighborhood burlesque theatre.

The image of Glamour Girl essentially comes from the same mold as the Whooshoo Girl with two major differences—her physical appeal has been enhanced considerably with longer eyelashes, a more sensuous lipline, a sweeping, provocative hairdo, ultra-stylish clothing, a trimmer waist and a fuller bustline. Where men are concerned she knows she's got what it takes to take what they've got.

The Glamour Girl establishes an instant physical rapport with those within the strip—and with readers too. She knows it and she shows it. All the advanced plumage plus a highly knowing attitude seems to give the second basic difference between the two types—the loss of innocence.

Certainly the reality of two wars and the accompanying economic depressions left its mark on the moral consciousness of the American public. The Glamour Girl became a fantasy image, created primarily by Hollywood to distract a troubled nation for a few hours through the magic of a Buster Keaton chorus line. Women emulated the new tight-fitting, come-on sexuality. Men dreamed of possessing it.

The comics mirrored the changing attitude and gave the impression that there was more going on between the panels than met the eye. The girls next door gave way to their more modern sisters, or often attempted to imitate their styles. Funny paper romance went from cheerful emotionalism to outright flesh and blood passion.

The change was especially apparent in the adventure strips that proliferated throughout the 30s. Flash Gordon is a perfect example. Never before had a comic strip featured a continuous parade of half-naked women, each more beautiful than the last. What clothing there was only served to show off the best drawn female figures this side of Mongo. Artist Alex Raymond insured the fact by using reel models for his Glamour Girls to keep their attractive anatomy accurate right down to the last detail. The formula worked, and Flash became one of the most popular strips in comics' history. Readers waited in vain for the ultimate episode, Flash Gordon and the Saturday Night Orbits of Mongo.

Milton Caniff introduced his own gallery of jet-set ladies in Terry and the Pirates. He, too, utilized models for the creation of Merrily Sandhurst, Burma, April Kene and, one of the most exotic and sensuous villainesses to ever make a hero walk the plank, the irrepressible Dragon Lady. Caniff had the right idea when he said, "Draw your cartoons for the kids, but always leave a couple of inches above the stockings for the old man."

He left even more than that above the stockings when he created G.I. Joe's favorite comic

pin-up girl, Miss Lace. Mala Call was the name of the strip, and it ran in camp newspapers where men and soldiers stopped long enough to hang up their helmets and start up a printing press. Lace conformed with the enlisted men rather than the officers, and became a symbol for every wife and sweetheart that had been left behind.

In Lili Abner, Al Capp took the Lili Abner strip in another direction. These were mountain women, y'no mus' unnerstan, hardly the heartiest to ever give chase to a typical, red-blooded, hundred percent American boy. Their homegrown figure made Raquel Welch look like Twiggy, and it was obvious that they had forgotten more about makin' love than all of Raymond's and Caniff's girls ever knew. Even their names conformed up wisps of folklore. Daisy was Mountbeam McSwine, Wolf Girl, Stupeflyn Jones and Appaletta von Climax. The idea was so solid that Capp launched an spin-off strip of some in the 50s, Long Sam—a female version of Abner.

An interesting sidelight to the Lili Abner story is that a fantasy artist Frank Frazetta assisted on the strip for nine years beginning in 1963, a period which obviously inspired his mountain girl illustrations. His ideal concept of women combines a fully-developed figure with a baby doll face, an image he has proffered from his early Johnny Comat series to his latest jungle girl paintings.

By this time, most realistic (and many humor) strips adopted the Glamour Girl for their own purposes. In some, like Ozark Ike's blonde-tressed, athletic Dinah, she became a steady character in the series. In others, such as Frank Robbins' Johnny Hazard, they came and went with each six weeks' adventure. Leonard Starr kept his girl, Mary Perkins, On Stage, front and center as often as possible.

The imagery of the classic Glamour Girl can be traced directly back to one of the foremost artists of the Jazz Age, Russell Patterson. So successful were his illustrations in the 20s for Collier Humor that they literally set the style of the series amongst the collegiate crowd.

Patterson's women were young, supple. They had legs—and stood on them in ways that thrust their hips out in subtle invitation while their spines deserted questions marks. They could give you the cold shoulder with a hot glance at the same time. They used lipstick, smoked cigarettes. Their shadowed eyes were all-knowing.

The artist's fragile, vintag line was deceptively simple, a perfect compliment for his use of blacks, which created intriguing, but pleasing abstract shapes. It was this aspect of design, and Patterson's ability to develop interesting patterns, that made him one of the most influential draftsmen in the first half of this century. Those who were inspired by his work include Noel Sickles, Roy Crane, Mills Caniff, Ralph Barton, Jefferson MacHammer and many others.

It's little known that Patterson

began his career with a French comic strip titled *Flare et Fleur* in 1914, in a Canadian newspaper. Afterward, he attended Chicago's Art Institute and Academy of Fine Arts, then became an interior designer and host of department stores. He contributed to many magazines throughout the flapper era, where his drawings rivaled those of John Held, Jr. In the eyes of the American public, in the 20s, he created art designs and costumes for the Zigfield Follies and George White's Scandals, then moved to Hollywood where he contributed the same service for films through the following decade. Relocating in New York, he took on the last of designing clothes, restaurant interiors and hotel lobbies, and almost anything else that caught his fancy. From 1961 to 1966, he returned to the comic strip form to produce one of the high points in the genre of "good girl art," *Mama*.

Between strips, a number of Patterson-influenced cartoonists carried on the tradition such as Ed Simms Campbell with *Gullies*, Jeff MacHammer with *Gags & Gals*, and Jay Allan with *Glamour Girl*. Don Flowers may have been the most important of these because of his subtle modification of the Patterson ideal.

Flowers' seductive thick and bruise-like legs gave his figures an additional dimension of animation. More significantly was his handling of facial features, especially eyes and lips, which have become the standard for today's artists. From the realistic to the cartoon style, this archetype seems to apply, and is even apparent in John Busceme's pretty comic book girls.

The Glamour Girl was accepted with open arms by the comics. The tradition of establishing a humorous situation built around a female character that had its beginnings in the newspaper strips (and was adopted by films and, much later, TV) found prenatal acceptance with the comic book readership.

They had names like Millie and Mitzi and Mopsy, and the only way to classify them properly is to state that they were very much like some Girls who had just become Glamour Girls. They had the look, the eyes, the hair, the figure of the original blonde sisters—but they also had innocence. They simply hadn't yet passed their final exam.

But, they were working on it. They also seemed to have boy friends or at least friend boys who were well aware of the facts of life and the direct relationship to the humor curve they peddled into their maturing forms. Only their names and hair colors were different. Whether they called themselves Corliss, Rusty, Sunny, Suzie, Tessie, Sue or Veronica, they were all the same living out the same romantic comedies in comics for teenage adolescents.

The art always ranged some between Winifred Winska and Fritz Ritz. Kitty Kaana had the cutest gimmick; her tales were riddled with "fashion panels" in the manner of

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For the specialist, **The Sensuous Frazetta** is a portfolio devoted exclusively to the Frazetta women, an unforgettable collection of females with curves in places where most girls don't even have places! Full and double-page sized pin-ups make this one of the most unique Frazetta offerings yet! \$2.00 plus .60.



newspaper strips such as *Boots*, *Kid Sister*, *Jane Arden*, *Mamie* and even *Flash Gordon*. These panels featured characters stripped down to the minimum, with accompanying clothing to be added to the figures in paper doll style. Katy's clothes were all designed by her readers who sent in their sketches for artist Bill Woggin to assimilate. No matter how editors considered the Fashion Panel, it was nonetheless the *Glamour Girls'* version of the strip issue.

The title of *Queen of the Glamour Girls* Comic has been held so firmly for the past thirty years that none is almost second or third place runners-up. Imagine the longest legs in comics, the pointiest breasts, the narrowest waist, a Niagara of platinum hair—and you've just pictured the one and only Torchy.

She was billed as "The Incendiary Blonde," a downright understatement because she could make temperatures (amongst other things) rise quicker than yesterday's gasoline prices. Torchy turned straight readers into Peeping Toms—if they didn't have a fetish before they picked up the book, they did by the time they put it down!

Torchy wore the tallest heels, the sheestest nylons, the lowest-cut gowns, the shortest skirts, the laciest slips, the slinkiest bras, the tiniest garter belts, the scantiest panties and the kindest array of merry widows, pajamas, waist-cinches and baby dolls this side of 42nd Street. She made Frederick's of Hollywood look like a Sears Roebuck catalog.

Those who claimed that Torchy had no redeeming qualities failed to realize the role she played in shaping the destinies of the immature and inexperienced youth of America in their throbbing quest for truth and knowledge. She revealed the mysteries of lush womanhood. She left no doubt as to what held up the world's smallest bikini. She set impossible standards for real life girls to follow.

What did it matter? It seemed like such a small price to pay.

Torchy Todd was the creation of Bill Ward, one of America's foremost female cartoonists. After graduating from Pratt Institute, he had held down a position as background and layout man in Jack Binder's Englewood, New Jersey comic production factory. By the end of 1942, Ward, like so many of his fellow artists, had been drafted into the service. He was also recruited to develop a comic strip for his company's newspaper, and dreamed up a girl character. In the tradition of Caniff's *Miss Loco*, though she was originally a brunette who answered to the name of Ack-Ack-Amy, Ward's humorous heroine nevertheless had all the elements that would go into the making of Torchy soon afterward. A bottle of bleach, a change of name, and the job was completed. Hey, soldier—that's a funny way to salute!

After the war, Ward settled into a penciller's job with Quality Comics. Reed Crendell drew the *Blackhawks* for *Modam*, while Ward took them through their



MAMIE
by
Russell
Peterson



MAMIE
MODELS

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pages in their own magazine. In 1946, he was asked to do a new strip and recalled the work for the Armed Forces papers. The editor approved the idea, and Torchy found a home.

Her acceptance ran in both *Modern* and *Bellman* for about three years, at which time incoming fan mail was so positive that the publisher decided to give Torchy a book of her own. The title ran for six issues in 1949 and 1950, most of which were drawn by Gil Ford who took the recent eighty off sex appeal to play for the humor angle. Ward did some covers and stories, but was mostly spread this over Quality's romance line.

With or without Ward, Torchy was so hot her book was banned in Boston. The series was scripted by Gwen Hansen, who found more ways to get Torchy in and out of her clothes than Gypsy Rose Lee. In one scene, as the Blonde Bombshell is looking for her bikini, a friend observes, "No wonder you can't find it! That amount of material couldn't even cover the tall light of a firrly!" Mothers of teenaged sons failed to see the humor in the situation. Public pressure closed the book on Torchy.

But Ward continued developing his art—and his girl. When Quality folded in the mid-50s, he began a long career as the prime supplier of single panel cartoons for *Humorama*. Ward's work was a stand-out. Nobody could put the sheen on nylon stockings like he could, or make lace galls so intricate—the trademark of his style. His career can be likened to a Sequoia tree whose rings can be counted to tell its age. With each passing year of Ward's art, the girls' busts grew larger while their waists shrank proportionately. One can almost tell the vintage of the art by the size of the cup.

There are those who would argue that Torchy goes well beyond the classification of the Glamour Girl category because of the heightened focus on sex appeal and the extrema fetishism—and they may be correct. Ward's art does invade some of the territory inhabited by the Erotic Girl, but the guidelines defining the divisions of "good girl art" are certainly open to personal interpretation. There's no denying that the series as a whole has more charm, vitality and humor than Charles's Angels, for example. But, it had a purpose for existing well beyond the pin-up aspect, and that fact alone establishes its qualifying factors.

It would not be unreasonable to consider Torchy to be comics' ultimate Glamour Girl. For Bill Ward, who drew girls better than anyone else as a kid and made a life-long career of it, Torchy was that rare perfect union of artist and subject matter. He is unquestionably king of comics' Glamour Girl cartoonists.

The age of specialization had begun, and comics were no exception to the rule. Just as the Wholesome Girl had stepped aside for the Glamour Girl, so would they both be eclipsed by the tidal wave of Fantasy Girls that waited in the wings.

The Erotic Girls were not far behind. STERANKO





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ROCKY HORROR

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revelations (everyone in, high heels and stockings, including the free-wheeling von Scott revolts (Riff Raff and Magen take over to return to their home planet), and resolution (Charlie Gray observing finally that the whole affair was "Lost in time

lost in space...and meaning").

Overall, the film is packed with action and unexpected visual delights. In its own odd way, it is a celebration of kinetic activity, sexual and otherwise. "Don't dream it, be it," is the lyric of one of its songs, and the movie lives up to the concept: nothing about the production is the least bit lathargic.

Furtar all but embraces the camera in his demands for attention. Riff Raff hops about like an acid-tripping spider on an elastic web. Magenta constantly

SPECIAL NOTICE TO ALL TIME WARRPERS!

The following costumes, used in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, are up for grabs to the highest bidder. Regular Frankie fans need no introductions—all others are invited to come up to the lab. All prices are minimum bids.

Frank N. Furtar's floor show shoes—\$500
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Brad's one sequined red glove from the floor show—\$75
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Two pairs of fishnet stockings from the floor show—\$25 each pair
One feather boa—\$25
Each item comes with a certificate of authenticity from Sue Blaine, costume mistress for *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. Each "character" item has the star's name etched inside. Bidding is open until the fall. Bids may be addressed to: Star Fleet Enterprises, 822 Pierpont St., Brooklyn NY 11201

physical and emotional exertions leave viewers stimulated yet exhausted.

Fan magazines, play productions and books have arisen from this madness being generated in some 300 theaters across the country. The Rocky Horror creator, Richard O'Brien, is happy—he's involved with some of the merchandising action. 20th Century-Fox is happy—they've recouped their investment and reaped a whirlwind. The Rocky Horror freaks are happy, even at \$3.00 a throw—it

THE ROCKY HORROR CULT Live! The Reading Pa. club

and sensually rubs against everything in sight. Only Brad and Janet appear static during their "normal" phase, but quickly become animated once their sexual horizons have been broadened and their clothes removed. The entire film races past under director Jim Sharman's barely sustained control (he also directed the stage versions), cramming every inch of the screen with throwaway detail.

Audience reaction to all this has taken on dimensions entirely out of proportion to the film itself. The glittering ruby mouth that kicks off the credit sequence gets an ovation and cries for "Lips! Lips!" Each member of the cast is also rated vocally—"Yay Frank!" "Weissas!" "Ho-neck!"

A wedding sequence opens the film proper, so of course, twenty pounds of rice sail through the air—sometimes still in the box. When it rains, it pours—from water pistols, spray guns and water balloons—but everyone in the theater is protected by makeshift newspaper hood umbrellas in emulation of Janet on screen (using a Cleveland Plain Dealer, as immortalized in the film, is a good way to score points).

Once or twice, Frank N. Furtar will talk directly to the viewer in sequences that are so mundane as to become picaresque. A song lyric calls for Frank to notice Brad and Janet's rain-soaked condition, which he interprets as sexual tension: "I see you shiver with antic..."

At this point the audience roar of "SAY IT!" loosens the hinges of churches within ten miles. "...patton," Frank whispers in response.

Every little nuance and gesture is a tip-off for some sort of audience response. If a song mentions "Cards for sorrow, Cards for pain," the janitor will be sweeping up about fifteen decks early Sunday morning. "There's a light, over at the Frankenstein place!" will bring eight dozen Bic Crickets aflame in violation of every known fire law, and keep theater managers on the lookout for torches and railroad fuses.

Frank's call for a dinner toast sends cracked wheat silicas airborne, not to mention an occasional white French leek dribbles. When the Transylvanian guests applaud Frank's genius, so too does the audience, with hoo, noisemakers and confetti. Overall, the noise level of the

Rocky Horror audience effectively smothers the soundtrack, but they make up for it by shouting out most of the lines and singing along. Impromptu Rocky Horror Ravas have also sprung up to enact the film before the front row seats, creating a "Live Sex Acts On Stage" carnival atmosphere. Many other filmmakers are simply content to dress up in drag and walk the aisles, incessantly working out their exhibitionist fantasies. Some of these bondage brokers are girls, but one must use caution in assessing garter belts, stockings and make-up in darkened theaters—unless you don't really care.

Occasionally, fanatics will fill in even the tiniest open spaces of the film's structure with their own curning. A particularly evocative song dedicated to the dead greaser Eddie has a strong, familiar rock 'n' roll cadence. In it there is an empty mustel bar, and-a-half, into which astute minds have very appropriately inserted "Sha-bop, sha-bop, sha-bop."

Not all of this background noise is directed at the screen, however. Once in a while, a viewer will mindlessly fixate on the cadaverous Magenta and

unleash a furious twenty-minute tirade of sexually ambitious, flagrantly illegal, and vocally unintelligible obscenities, which will earn him a round of applause. As a matter of fact, obscenities are randomly belted out every seven seconds or so, and those involving hamsters and one's own mother are repeated often if encouraged.

Drugs are not really a part of the Rocky Horror scene—only a smuggled-in can of beer seems suitably tacky.

The young are drawn to the film, primarily, and no one seems to question anybody's age for this relatively mild R-rated film. Theater managers have been observed in their ticket booths, rapturously gripping double fistfuls of dollar bills and grinning foolishly at the long lines still waiting to get in. The occasional maiden out or elderly chaperone accompanying one or more dozen minors generally maintains a stoic silence, eyes glassy end large as golf-balls, frozen in their seats.

Nevertheless, there is always a harmless, celebratory feeling to *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, regardless of the chaos it engenders. Good triumphs over evil in the story, and the marital,

fills their lives with unrestrained insanity for a couple of hours a week. Only Tim Curry is really unhappy—he's having trouble putting the role of the raging queen behind him in the search for other work.

And what of the parent who wonders where little Johnny goes, dressed like his sister Jane, every week? It is an interesting question, but the film simply doesn't pack the psycho-sexual weight to provide any answer but foolish fun—impure and simple.

In any case, the Rocky Horror cult is too large and too devoted to pay and attention to such imponderables.

Only boredom will erode the film's foreword—but that day won't come for some time yet. Until then, midnight will still be the witching hour, with cars pulling into the theater parking lots a half-hour early in eager anticipation.

And while waiting, in the velvet darkness, an 8-track tape player will be heard through an open window, along with soft, sung-along voices: "The blackness would be hitting me, And the void would be calling. Let's do the Time Warp again. Let's do the Time Warp again..."

Ken Bruzenak

ROBERT E. HOWARD



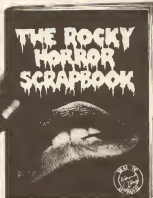
Just when you think you've got everything! Here's another CONAN item for your collection at less than half of it's usual \$4.95 price—and why not, half the year's gone already! Actually, we picked 'em up cheap, and we're selling 'em the same way. Frezotta relative and imitator, Ken Kelly, follows in the footsteps of the master with a dozen sword and sorcery scenes. All are painted in the kind of blazing full-color that makes you wish black and white were in style again! If that's not enough for the money, there's a big bonus 12x17" poster-sized centerspread. Our sources tell us that the calendar itself was never distributed. In our opinion, this will probably be the only one published—and at this price, how can you go wrong? We're not saying that five years from now you'll curse yourself for not picking up a copy, but why take the chance! A steal at \$2.00.



**DON'T DREAM IT!
SEE IT...IN
THREE HOT NEW
VOLUMES OF
DARK
DELIGHTS!**



Rose-tint your world with these raunchy Rocky Horror rage! Each venomous volume has been personally approved by revolting Richard O'Brien, and contains scraps from his secret files—each one better than an old Steve Reeves movie!



Come up to the lab—and see what's on the slab! It's a three-course Rocky Horror dinner, complete with Meat Loaf. The Poster Books are tempting tid-bits from Transylvania, stuffed with backstage gossip and extra helpings of feverish fotos—including TWO 17x22" POSTERS—a MIND-BLOWING 22x34" FOLDCUT that will make freaky Frank followers shudder. Both are in full-color at \$1.50 (Vol. 1) and \$2.50 (Vol. 2). For the main course, there's The Rocky Horror Scrapbook, a graveyard gallery of morbid memories and putrid pictures crammed into one monstrous Transylvanian treasure trove. The scandalous Rocky Horror story—from stage to screen—is dredged up and re-examined, with a mug-file of color portraits of Frank, Brad, Janet, Riff Raff and the whole crew, plus features, profiles and interviews. All for a mere \$10.95 in Earthling currency.

THE MAN BEHIND THE PEN: FINLAY



he began by using scratchboard (black-inked drawing surface, scratched to reveal white lines) on the white uncoated surface. Additional brushwork in black as he needed it; he then fashioned middle tones of grey by working from black to white and white to black on the same drawing.

Eventually, he drew directly on the scratchboard, using an extremely fine instrument—the 200-into-pinch pencil. He dipped the point in India ink and then allowed only the liquid to touch the drawing surface. The point was then wiped and redipped for each dot in turn. Dip, touch, wipe. Dip, touch, wipe. Dip, touch, wipe. Dot after dot after dot. Hundreds. Thousands. One by one.

And from this laborious method came a procession of gorgeous women, angel-winged and gossamer-veiled; light-featured globules, starfish and free; bizarre creatures, whose ethereal forms floated across landscapes borne out of nightmare. The property of the meticulous style stretched over 35 years, in over 2800 separate manifestations of genius. Their function: to graphically complement the imaginative words of H. P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, A. Merritt, Henry Kuttner, Robert Bloch, and dozens of other talented writers. And one of the more pleasing results? The artist responsible was ultimately honored as the Dean of Science Fiction Art in 1964.

His name: Virgil Finlay. Finlay got his start in the pages of *Weird Tales* late in 1935, thanks to the foresightedness of that legendary pulp editor, Farnsworth Wright. Originally, Wright had his doubts about how well the reproduction of Finlay's fine stipple and cross-hatch technique would turn out. But, after illustrations for Paul Ernst's *Dancing Feet*, C. A. Smith's *Chain of Aforgiveness* and Edmund Hamilton's *Great Brain of Kador*, and the forthcoming avalanche of kudos-laden fanmail, no doubts remained. Finlay had scored in a big way with his dazzling technique and singular sense of organic design. He was on his way to stardom as the top SF fantasy illustrator of the late 30s and 40s.

A brief fling at Shakespeare—one of Wright's pet projects—ended in failure, but Wright's edition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* nevertheless boasted a stunning 25 specially-commissioned Finlay renderings. This short interruption cost Finlay exposure in 3 consecutive issues of WT, but afterwards, his meteoric rise in popularity continued unabated.

Roscoe's later volumes overflowed with ecstatic praise for Finlay's art, again ignoring the stories themselves. He became the darling of H. P. Lovecraft and the envy of Margaret Brundage, who renounced Finlay edging her out as primary WT cover artist. She had replaced J. Allen St. John and now the precocious youngster from Rochester was replacing her, commanding top

dollar (\$100 per cover) in the process. In actuality, the success of this experiment was due to the shrewd editorial moves of Farnsworth Wright, who realized that giving Finlay more work in this form would keep him from jumping too soon to other markets.

In 1937, Finlay moved to New York City to join the staff of the *American Weekly* at the invitation of noted fantasist A. Merritt, who had hired him to illustrate *Virgil* repeatedly, owing more to the oddball thickness of Merritt than any flow of Finlay's. A year later, *Weird Tales* moved its operation to NYC, but cover rates had been cut in half. At the insistence of his good friend, Henry Kuttner, Finlay broke into the science fiction pulps with *Mon Weisinger's Thrilling Wonder Stories* providing the initial launchpoint into a new phase of Finlay's career. Opportunities followed with a future SF portfolio, *Fantastic Adventures* and *Amazing Stories* (whose parent firm, Frank A. Munsey Co., was the first to issue Finlay's portfolios). *Fantastic Adventures* and *Amazing Stories* all saw increasing contributions by Finlay after Randolph Hearst Sr. had fired him from the *American Weekly*, and Farnsworth Wright had been released as editor of *Weird Tales*. These magazines provided the bulk of Finlay's work up until the war years, which for him were 1943 to 1946.

After a stint in the Pacific, he returned with a sharpened technique to re-join the field anew. Even the *American* had him back. The period 1947 to 1951 was a peak time with the end of the wartime paper shortage, and Finlay was packing in 16-hour days, 7 days a week with no vacations. There was plenty of work for everyone, including Hannes Bok, Frank Paul, and Lawrence S. Stevens, who had developed a stipple technique of his own during Finlay's wartime absence.

But, one by one, many mainstays of the pulp era silently folded as the 50s brought cutbacks, recession, and digested magazines whose sales were abysmally low. *Amazing Stories*, *Fantastic*, and *Galaxy* rose to fill the vacuum left by the demise of *Thrilling Wonder*, *Stanning*, *Fantasy Story*, *Magazine* and *Weird Tales*, but none of these were as lucrative as the short-lived *Fantastic Universe* Science Fiction or the *satellite* magazines which often paid \$150 or so for a single piece of art. The face of the competition was changing too, with newcomers like Walt Wood, Ed Emshwiller and Richard Powers introducing the "clean cold machine" look of the 50s. An army of BEMS and robots tended to drown out the warm, heroic, organic, romantic fantasies of Finlay. Even flings at the comics turned out badly, with the color often muddying out his black-and-white stippling.

For *Real Fact Comics* and *Mystery in Space*, Finlay closed out the disastrous 50s in a flurry of great paintings. His first, *Dot by dot by dot*, was selling many of the hundreds he produced to both housecallers

and private gallery customers.

Throughout the 60s he continued illustrating for *Galaxy*, *Amazing* and *Fantastic*. But his major work in the 60s came in *Ashtory—Your Daily Horoscope* and *Everywoman's Daily Horoscope*. Sales of his easel paintings also continued, and he was honored with live one-man shows, features at various times in places like the NY Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Fog Museum at Haverhill, among others. Three months after he was named the Dean of Science Fiction Art at a Newark, N.J. convention in 1964 (his first and only public appearance), he was asked for a sample drawing for a proposed Houghton-Mifflin edition of *The Hobbit*. But Tolkien himself denied Finlay the chance when he deemed his own artwork more suitable for the volume. If not for this, Finlay might have enjoyed an overwhelming resistance in popularity thanks to the scattered release of various portfolios of his work. Few are still extant, a slim limited edition collection of 31 of his more outstanding plates being one example.

The 70s brought illness, and a year of suffering with multiple forms of cancer. In January 1971, at the age of 56, death brought an end to a long and brilliant career.

During his lifetime, Finlay had influenced and inspired every other artist. While he never openly professed a particular liking for the work of Gustave Doré, that artist's style was conspicuously surfaced in Finlay's efforts. He also held such varied talents as Aubrey Beardsley, Winsor McKay and Heinrich Kley among others in high esteem. Franklin Booth probably impressed Finlay with his engraving style. Above all, he admired the painting and draughtsmanship of Picasso.

But it does not seem readily apparent who Finlay himself is inspiring these days. A conjectural side case can be made for *Frank Miller*, *Mogwai Giraffe* who dabbles in the various techniques Finlay mastered in his lifetime—especially stipple, cross-hatch, and cross-hatching. Other modern counterparts seem visibly extant. Nor is Finlay's masterful stipple technique likely to be much emulated by artists of the present, owing to the overly time-consuming effort each piece requires.

Changing times, conditions, and circumstances may have indeed predestined a phenomenon such as Finlay to be as rare as Kohoutek's Comet. Nevertheless, the magnitude of his achievement, the over-arching body of his work, consistently good to excellent in quality, inspires other craftsmen, as something totally often is in itself. And that peculiar genius that is Finlay's will, no doubt, continue to elch itself upon the impressionable, perceptive minds of future painters. *Dot by dot by dot.*

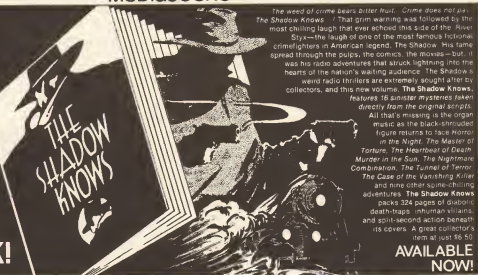
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FROM OUT OF THE PAST... 16 SHADOW THRILLERS IN A GREAT NEW BOOK!



The weed of crime bears bitter fruit... Crime does not just. The Shadow Knows... That grim warning was followed by the most chilling laugh that ever echoed this side of the River Styx—the laugh of one of the most famous fictional crimefighters in American legend, The Shadow. His fame spread through the pulps, the comics, the movies—but it was his radio adventures that struck lightning into the hearts of the nation's waiting audience. The Shadow's weird radio thrillers are extremely sought after by collectors, and this new volume, *The Shadow Knows*, features 16 sinister mysteries taken directly from the original scripts.

All that's missing is the organ music as the black-shrouded figure returns to face *Horror in the Night*, *The Master of Torture*, *The Heartbeat of Death*, *Murder in the Sun*, *The Nightmare Combination*, *The Tunnel of Terror*, *The Case of the Vanishing Killer* and nine other spine-chilling adventures. *The Shadow Knows* packs 324 pages of diabolic death-traps, inhuman villains, and split-second action beneath its covers. A great collector's item at just \$6.50.

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NOW!**

FRAZZETTA 80

THE ONLY NEW FRANK FRAZZETTA COLLECTION TO BE PUBLISHED IN 1979

Here's the newest gallery of paintings for the collector of sword and sorcery art—The 1980 Frazzetta Calendar! An explosive year's worth of high fantasy, horror and science fiction is featured in this latest showcase gallery of illustrations by America's foremost fantasy artist. Originally created as covers for the novels of Robert E. Howard and other writers of heroic adventure, these full-color visualizations of demonic monsters, naked warrior women and steel-thewed barbarians have NEVER BEEN COLLECTED BEFORE! In a single publication. Spend a year with Frazzetta—12 vibrant paintings, a double-sized centerfold poster and cover. Available at \$4.95. Frazzetta completists: there will be no new edition of *The Fantastic Art of Frazzetta* this year!



NO NEED TO GO INTO ORBIT... STAR-REACH AND IMAGINE ARE NOW IN STOCK!!

Want the best the professionals can offer, unhampered by the Comics Code censorship? These two titles provide just that—16 pages of adventure, science fiction, humor and fantasy, all material that you'll never find in overground comics, all created by top pros with the kind of enthusiasm and excitement that only seems to exist in the undergrounds. All issues are now in stock. *Star-Reach* features Starlin, Chaykin, Simonson, SR2—Adams, Starlin, Gontano, SR3—Brunner, Vossburg, Leialoha, SR4—Chaykin, Vossburg, Leialoha, SR5—Chaykin, Starlin, Brunner, SR6—Jones, Gould, Bradbury, Nino, Slater, SR7—Vossburg, Engelhart, Smith, SR8—Russell, Day, Starlin, SR9—Starlin, Mottler, Day, Gilbert, SR10—Brunner, Russell, Vossburg, SR11—Mottler, Steadley, Day, SR12—Morrow, Gilbert, Zelazny, SR13—Lyda, Leialoha, Mottler, SR14—Starlin, Mottler, Mars, SR15—Leialoha, Lyda, Mottler, SR16—Magazine, Mottler, Mars, Starlin, Marshall, *Imagine* 1 has Adams, Rogers, Larson, *Issue 2*—Vossburg, Day, Russell, *Issue 3*—Leialoha, Russell, Gilbert, Vossburg, *Issue 4*—Ditko, Gilbert, Smith, *Issue 5*—Magazine size, Gould, Kirchner, Gilbert.



Star Trek...again?

Certainly the liveliest TV series ever to be cancelled and revived, Star Trek is being reincarnated again, this time at Marvel Comics. The deal was finalized on the morning of June 22, and the team of Mary Wolfman and Dave Cockrum are only waiting for a copy of the shooting script to begin an adaptation of Star Trek—The Movie to tie in with the film's projected Christmas release date.

The project has been scheduled to appear in a 50-plus page story in the full-color Marvel Super Special magazine, with some extra pages of articles and photos tossed in. There is a remote possibility of expanding the Star Trek adaptation over two

Diego Comic Convention for the line distinctions between Romulan, Vulcan and Klingon ancestry.

Trekkies are advised that religious adherence to the series' hundreds of minuscule nuances will not be Marvel's criteria, but rather mere touchstones in tele capturing the "thinking man's science fiction" flavor. The only other problem still to be solved in the series will involve coloring—the TV series made character identification easy by allowing for multi-hued uniforms while the new film has outfitted everyone in neutral beige coats that tend to look alike. Perhaps Marvel will expand upon the Star Trek crew by introducing an irresistible, but likable alien



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The long-promised return of Man-Thing is scheduled for August, but the Sub-Mariner is still beached for overhaul and repairs. And for reasons no one can fully explain, other than speculation on the selling power of skulls, Marvel's own Harley from Hell, Ghost Rider, steps up to monthly production with issue 39.

Tom Yeates, a former student of Joe Kubert's cartoon school, is working on the Super-Special full-color story of the Holling Stone. Yeates was originally assigned a 12-page back-up feature on the project, but was subsequently offered the entire book based upon his initial pencils.

There is yet another rock book

in the Cadence scheme of things these days, so that the books will probably become even more rigidly formatted in concept, while TV and movie spin-offs will proliferate, probably ignoring all the established character concepts. There will also be a larger number of preposterous ideas coming, such as the creation of the She-Hulk—a copyright protection move in case a TV scriptwriter should decide to breed an unlicensed spin-off series, by performing a blood transfusion between David Banner and a female character.

Fans may have heard that there is also a Spider-Man live-action series being produced in Japan that bears no resemblance to either the American TV



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issues, simply because the plot is complex and much of the visual appeal would be enhanced with liberal usage of double-page spreads for at least six key scenes, but the immediate schedule does not call for such a grandiose presentation.

Plans for cloning the tale have already begun—in triplicate. The same material appearing in the Super Special will be enlarged for a giant Marvel Treasury tabloid volume, shrunk and dished for a color paperback, and divided into thirds to provide the first three issues of the regular monthly Star Trek comic book which has moved from Gold Key to Marvel.

Marvel crew boards the Enterprise

Wolfman and Cockrum, and hopefully Joe Sinnott, will continue on the monthly Trek comic chores, and promises to be as faithful as possible to the well established legacy of the TV series. To this end, Marvel will welcome any truly informative fanzines and scholarly material sent to him care of the Marvel offices for background research, and hopes to check with Roddenberry during the San



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Other new books in the Marvel line-up are potentially as important and interesting as Star Trek, but will still require some development before going on sale.

Rom, the Space Knight, will debut in September, as Marvel's contribution to the giant robot craze begun by the Japanese Shogun Warriors. Rom is based on a toy being manufactured by Parker Brothers which was not simply licensed, but codevel-

oped by Marvel. "I really wasn't interested in just plucking up another merchandising property," explains Jim Shooter, "so much as I was in creating a brand new character. So we worked with Parker's on building a Rom legend and mythology which will carry over in the toy's marketing and keep all our ideas consistent with one another." Bill Mantlo will write the Rom series, Sal Buscema will pencil and ink, with editing by Shooter and Mary Jo Duffy.

due from Marvel in the near future, but it's a project with a difference. Marvel is creating a comic rock group in cooperation with Casablanca Records, who will see to it that a real group is formed and has songs on the air. The two entertainment mediums will then cross-feed one another money and audiences. No formal arrangements have been made on this idea yet, but early 1980 is the target date at this time.

Marvel in multi-media is becoming a larger consideration

or comic series, and are probably wondering what's going on. All the answers will be provided in an upcoming issue of Marvel Premier, which will take a photo-novel format, and be coordinated by Mary Wolfman.

The incentive behind all this is that Marvel has licensed Spider-Man to a Japanese TV company, who turned it into the hit weekly series of 1979. The only thing they have retained, however, is the costume. There is no Peter Parker, just a kid with an older sister, a younger brother and father. The Japanese Spider-Man derives his powers from a bracelet given to him by a wisened old man living in the Cave of the Last of the Spider-People. There is a Spidey-car in the series, as well as the inevitable giant Spidey-Robot.

Wolfman is working on a 60-page explanation of all this using film-frame enlargements from the TV series, along with an artwork prologue in which the American Spider-Man visits Nick Fury and SHIELD to see what their agents can tell him about his oriental counterpart. The art and photoframes come together rather simply at this point—Fury just turns on a movie projector and says, "We've been watching this Japanese Spider-Man some time now, and this is the dossier our agents have assembled."

Many would like to get this project into full-color, simply because the show is a brilliantly

COMIXSCENE

explosive showcases of dazzling color-effects, but black-and-white is cheaper to produce. Don't look for a sequel, because the Japanese are even more mercenary about their TV series than the Americans. Toys are created and manufactured first in Japan, and marketed through commercials for year or so. Then a TV series is created with a predetermined life-span of 48 to 56 episodes, with concurrent comic book tie-ins. At the end of this two year period, everything is scrapped, a new toy manufactured, and the process starts again—all of which explains why Japan has nearly 200 giant robots and an infinite number of sports, samurai and adventure series available for export.



Marvel appears to be learning these lessons well, however, and is taking steps to fill the gap in their merchandising system. Wolfman, Shooter and Sel Buscema have assembled a 12-page Spider-Man Meets the Hulk promotional comic that attempts to resolve some of the comic and TV series conflicts, right down to the appearance of David R. B. Banner. Exactly where this book will be used is not determined yet, but there are chances of its turning up in newspapers as an advertising gimmick.

In yet another direction, Wolfman has written an intelligent story for an upcoming coloring book starring Spider-Man—surely a first for this medium. "The crayon crowd usually gets talked down to in the worst way, and always sees some of the least professional art ever created," Marv explains. "I just wanted to give them something better than 'Spidey's suit is red and blue' in the writing, and came up with a story that I like so much I will probably adapt it for the regular monthly comic."

Sten appears to be deeply involved in the Marvel merchandising mania, and has found an apartment in California to facilitate his business in Hollywood, and use as a stopover spot between New York and Japan. The results of Stan's globe-hopping will be turning up

in various forms—there are cartoon series currently in the works for Spider-Man and The Thing, and live action series or specials for Captain America, The Sub-Mariner and others. Stan is also actively involved in the current production of a full-length Silver Surfer movie, acting as technical advisor. The script is being written, and is receiving frequent notation concerning the character's continuity.

Stan's commitment to the Surfer is no secret to comic fans. One example is the recent cancellation of a Surfer paperback novel written by Bill Rotstein—the reason being that Stan was not consulted on the plot, and didn't feel completely



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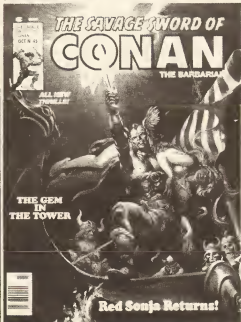
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right about the character's handling. Marvel, in support of this decision, is picking up the bill for a novel which will never see print.

Roy Thomas, pursuing his own TV and film career, has recently optioned three TV series ideas to Cherries Fries Productions, who also handle the Spider-Man show. One of the ideas sold is science-fiction oriented, and the other two are in a fantasy/comedy vein. Roy has also sold a script for a Plastic Man cartoon (part of the two-hour Plastic Man Comedy Adventure Show), and has even submitted a script for *Thru's Company*.



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On the downbeat side, Roy has almost exhausted the original Robert E. Howard sword and sorcery yarns in his Conan comics and magazines. *Savage Sword* 44 and 45 will deplete the

last REH tales from the paperback collection *Conan the Sub-Mariner*, illustrated by Sel Buscema. Issue 46 will fill-in the sage with DeCamp's Moon of Blood, and the last black-and-white pure Howard tale will appear in issues 47 and 48, *Treasure of Treasures*. The initial 30 pages of *Treasures* are pencilled by Gil Kane, and have been in inventory for several years while awaiting scheduling. The concluding 70 pages of this final adaptation are by John Buscema, who slipped in when Gil began his *Star Hawks* series.

The last color Conan based upon an original Howard tale will be *The Vale of Lost Women*. Then it's off to other sources for Conan stories, beginning with

Skalos. After that, Roy's on his own.

The Conan Annual for this year will be a direct follow-up to last year's issue, highlighted by the wedding of everyone's favorite barbarian. The king-sized 68-cent volume will also serve as a dramatic lead-in to the promised King Conan comic quarterly, which will debut this fall. In this new companion color series, Conan is 65 years old, with much of the action centered around his 13-year-old son, Conn.

Red Sonja, Roy's Howard-inspired heroine is also in the news as her full-color *Super Special* comes close to realization. Tony DeZuniga and Dick Giordano are each pencilling and inking separate stories for the



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DeCamp and Carter's Conan the Liberator, which explains how Conan came to be a king. Future plans also call for an adaptation of Andrew Offutt's *Conan and the Sorcerer*, and *The Sword of*

magazine. Soon after, Red Sonja and the Barbariana will make its debut as a regular black-and-white magazine which is finally going into production now that a regular artist has been found in the profile personage of Gil Kane. Gil will attempt to squeeze 30 or so pages of Sonja into his schedule every few months, between his more pressing commitments to *Star Hawks* and his newly-acquired *Tarzan* Sunday page. To help keep Kane's work load reasonable, Dick Giordano is drawing Red Sonja's origin for issue 3 (based upon an unpublished pencil job by Howe Chaykin). Back-up barbarian stories will possibly

news/views/reviews from the world of comics

include Solomon Kane in *Wings of the Night*, with art by Dave Wenzel, along with *Bran MacMor* and others.

One final word on Conan—his syndicated comic adventures appear to be holding their own in newspapers throughout the U.S. Sales have skyrocketed in Latin America, however, where the royalty payments undoubtedly amount to a whopping two or three fistfuls of pesos per paper.

In a related mythological vein, Thor's 79 Annual will recount the legendary War of Troy, with a heretofore unrecorded appearance by a Norse god in Greek's clothing. This will give readers a taste of Roy's new Hammer of Thor quarterly, which will be produced in the 60-cent size, and

an end to all the monster villains Spider-Man has been facing for a year and a half," Mary reveals. "I feel, and a look at Stan's early stories supports me, that Spider-Man is more of a gimmick series.

Monsters are just too powerful and remote to the humanistic reality we're trying to create. Scientifically enhanced humans are at least potentially believable, while slaving green monsters just don't fit. In Manhattan, I just want to get the series back to an overall straight track, and concentrate on one or two-part stories, so that the readers can more easily identify with the characters. Those rambling epic tales are tough to keep track of in the long run. They dilute the conflict so much



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Satane stories scheduled to book up the book in issues two and three have been quietly pulled, and Gene Colan is rapidly working up supplementary Dracula features to fill the empty pages. Nobody wants to edit exactly why Satane is being "postponed for alterations," but at least three sources hinted that the move came soon after Jim Shooter actually read one of the stories for the first time.

And finally, Spider-Man's upcoming rematch with Supeman has been stalled at the contract negotiations stage and tentatively rescheduled for summer 1980 distribution. Meanwhile, John Buscema is keeping busy with a project intended to follow up his *Waidworld* work—a tou-

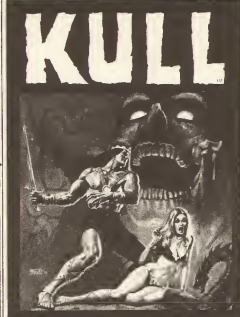
"Best Dressed Green Monster Lady in a Dramatic Performance."

As a sidelight (or showaside) to all this frenetic activity at Marvel, the people from Edgar Rice Burroughs Inc. have decided to cancel their Tarzan and John Carter licensing contracts with Marvel, terminating with the issues on sale in July. Their office threatened plans to create their own publishing company as a means of assuring complete control over the characters have apparently arisen again. Unfortunately, the comics medium is on the decline, and distributors simply do not want to handle any magazine priced under a dollar.

DC Publisher Jenette Kahn



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more or less pick up where Stan and Jack left off with the *Tales of Asgard*.

Archie Goodwin is returning to the writing chores of the *Fantastic Four* with issue 219, so that Roy Wolfman can take over the full-time scripting of Marvel's mainline web-crawling titles, *The Amazing Spider-Man* and *The Spectacular Spider-Man*. The primary reason for this move is so that Spidey can enjoy a higher character continuity and a more cohesive point of view. The *Spectacular* series will focus primarily on Peter Parker's college days, while *Amazing* will fill in the personal, financial and social gaps. "I also want to put



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that its easy to bore both the reader and the writer. I know I care about my characters when their conflicts are given a sense of immediacy by being confined within a 17 or 34 page format."

Wolfman's black-and-white *Dracula* has finally been placed on the schedule for August release, but there are already delays hanging in the production of subsequent issues. The 14-page



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came out of seclusion recently to announce that a number of new projects were being prepared for the big Christmas gold rush—not one of which was a DC comic. Elliot Maggin is preparing another *Superman* novel, Gerry Conway a *Batman* novel, Paul Levitz a *Guide to Collecting*

DC plans non-comix line-up

Comica, Curt Swan and Bob Oksner a *Superman Pop-Up Book*, Ross Andru and Joe Orlando a *Superman Mix and Match Storybook*, E. Nelson Bridwell and Ramona Fradon four *Little Library Superman* books, and an anonymous *Super-Heroes Cookbook* is also on the way.

Otherwise, the big news from DC is that Ross Andru has turned over the majority of his editorial workload to other staffers, retaining only three western series. Ross will devote most of his free time to penciling, and plans to enter the developmental aspect of comics and special projects by working closely with Managing Editor Joe

force plotting and pendling production based upon the legends of King Arthur, titled *Merlin the Magician*. Filled with medieval knights and towering castles, the book shows the promise of presenting a highly energized version of Prince Valiant for modern readers. This will be another special presentation package from Marvel, probably in full-color, but is being kept under wraps and unscheduled for the time being. Another Buscema assignment, already completed, is the late-breaking premiere of the *She-Hulk*, currently rushing through production for a late summer release, presumably to head off any TV contenders for the title of

COMIXSCENE

Orlando.

Taking up most of the slack for Andru is Len Wein, who has up till now been primarily a freelance writer for *Superman* and *Batman*. Len will continue to freelance, but now as a full-fledged editor with an office in the Warner Communications Building, overseeing the production of the *Justice League*, *Flash*, *Wonder Woman*, *Adventure* (concurrently demoted to 40-cent size), *House of Mystery*, *Man of War* and *World War*.

Len formally took over July 2, and most of the books will not require the buying of any new material for nearly three months, which neatly coincides with the end of the summer comic convention season.

As of late June, Wein's plans include: the return of Steve Trevor (twice deceased) to *Wonder Woman*; *Plasti-Man* by Joe Steton and a new version of *Sterman* by Steve Ditko for *Adventure*; the return of the dinosaur-riden *War That Time Forgot* in *World War*; the start of a continuing series in *House of Mystery*; and the possibility of new series to relate with *Gravestalker* in *Man of War*.

In his spare time, Len will continue to script regularly for *Batman*, fill-in occasionally on *Brave* and the *Bold* and *DC Presents*, and produce all the *Human Targets* he can.

Due to this increase in Wein's workload, Garry Conway will



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take over the *Superman* series with issue 345. Conway will also be writing a massive *Superman* Family book-length story for issue 200, featuring all the regular stars of the title in a cover to cover free-for-all.

Wein's Simonson will be dropping into the DC offices long enough to contribute an 18-page *Batman* vs. *The Joker* tale for issue 321. In the companion *Justice League* and *The Batman Family*, the *Caped Crusader* stars in a mystery thriller with a twist, and Steve Ditko introduces yet another new superhero—The Odd Man.

Green Lantern will return to his old-fashioned space opera format, dropping the socially relevant *Green Arrow*, with issue 123. Along the way, he will receive a nostalgic boost with a new cover by GL vet Gil Kane.

In the syndicated newspaper comic strip arena, Marv Wolfman, Ross Andru and Mike Esposito have sold a daily and Sunday series titled *Unexplained*. It's a combination soap opera/adventure concept, sort of a *Mary Perkins* *Psychic Detective*, created on the observation that a large number of women's gossip magazines trade heavily on UFOs and astrology, and soap opera comic strips appear to be among the most durable through the years.

Wolfman, Andru and Esposito have made a particularly sweet deal in terms of subsidiary right

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to the strip, and the syndicate has made several unprecedented concessions in the ownership and copyright areas. "We had been trying to sell our idea for about a year before the Copley New Service, a wisem-based syndicate servicing some 1500 papers, finally bought it," said Wolfman.

"It's not really on occult strip, but it is based upon researched facts dealing with unexplained phenomena. Our lead character is a woman named Revan Winters, a parapsychologist, who opens her casebook to examine character studies of people caught up in bizarre situations. The first storyline concerns a UFO incident and its physical after-effects on a pregnant woman and her husband."

"We're hoping that comic fans will write their local paper in an effort to promote the strip, and I plan to personally push it at all the conventions throughout the summer."

And finally, as Jack Katz rounds the First Kingdom bend with issue 10 safely at the printers and scheduled for July release, a change will be noted in the series, making it somewhat easier to read. From this point on, the captions and dialogue are being typeset—a more expensive move, but one likely to enhance the legibility of the series. Such growth, in various stages of production, are



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part of Jack's overall plans for the First Kingdom, and there will be more ahead: "Many have asked if I felt I was going to finish the 24 books of the First Kingdom. The answer is yes—a universe time yes."

"I lost 14 years in which I didn't work and 17 years that I didn't ink. And, though I'm finding it so hard to catch up with that loss, and my work has certainly shown it, I will keep fighting back. As a young man, I was eerily abused

Katz keeps Kingdoms coming

in the field—like so many others. Not fully realizing my ability, I accepted the decrees of the editors. I, as so many others, lost my way. But I found it at the age of 45. It is so difficult for me, with my imagination, for I have to draw upon untapped acorns to support the oak trees of ideas I have to carry out my vision. So if at times I seem to miss my mark, I simply hope you'll understand. My inkling is beginning to show the visual sense of my intelligence. Perhaps in the next few books that vision may be realized." ●

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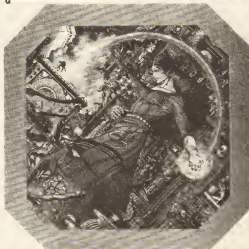
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